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April 26, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510


Dear Majority Leader Reid:

I am writing today because, as you know, there are a number of legislative issues, including tax extenders, the 2001 and 2003 tax provisions, the physician repayment rate, appropriations bills, the planned sequester, and another debt limit increase that the Senate will be confronting in the lame-duck session at the end of 2012. It will be essential that we are prepared for this session with thoroughly vetted, well thought out proposals that have been considered by the appropriate committees of the Senate. We have sufficient time over the next months to consider the array of options rather than relegating these issues to the lame-duck session with last-minute, poorly thought out measures assembled by just a relative few. By laying the groundwork now, the committees of jurisdiction can have a thorough, transparent, and accountable process in accordance with the traditions of the Senate. In that light, I urge you to forego the upcoming recess, and instead instruct the committees of jurisdiction to begin their work.

Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke has appropriately labeled the fiscal decisions that are imminent after the election as a massive "fiscal cliff." We should face that fiscal cliff now in a systematic manner, with our committees fully analyzing the costs, challenges, and potential alternatives – rather than waiting until after the election when discussions will be compressed into just a few short weeks.

We should learn from the debt ceiling debacle, when an eleventh-hour deal averted a government shutdown but created the now-failed Supercommittee and contributed to a first-ever downgrade in our credit rating. At a time when our economic recovery continues to stagnate and Americans across the nation are struggling, the U.S. Senate should not be wasting these vital months. Families and businesses, small and large, expect the government to provide certainty – yet, that certainty will remain lacking until we address these critical issues. I hope that you will give this request your prompt and utmost consideration.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Leader Mitch McConnell

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